Academic Affairs Committee Meeting


Committee Members Absent: Bonnie Newsom

Trustee Johnson called the meeting to order and introduced the Committee members. He explained to the Committee that a Committee Work Plan is being developed to outline the Committee’s strategies and goals for the fiscal year.

**Academic Program Alignment Strategy.** Dr. James Breece, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, reviewed the past, current and future work on academic program realignment. Dr. Breece has been working with the Chief Academic Officers at each university to develop a strategy that has its origins in the analysis done for the New Challenges, New Directions and Advancing Maine initiatives.

A multi-pronged strategy has been developed that, working within a shared governance process, would develop, revitalize and expand programs of high need. The goal of this work is to make the System’s program offerings more efficient, high quality, and relevant to Maine’s businesses and citizens. An Academic Program Development and Alignment Report will be provided to the Trustees annually that include the actions and metrics below:

1. **Review programs with five or fewer graduates per year**
   - Metrics: Monitor graduation data by program on an annual basis; ensure progress towards goals.

2. **Industry and business outreach**
   - Metrics: Continuously seek outside advice; study reports; develop information flows; hold annual planning summits.

3. **New program development**
   - Metrics: Make development plans; monitor program development and enrollments on an ongoing basis.

4. **Create new opportunities for Maine students**
   - Metrics: Monitor program development and enrollments.

5. **Student/faculty ratios and peer targets**
   - Metrics: Annually monitor ratios; ensure progress towards targets.

6. **College readiness**
   - Metrics: Monitor remedial course enrollments.

7. **Program alignment and course transfers from the Maine Community College System**
   - Metrics: Monitor the number of transfer students.

8. **Signature programs and program duplications (new initiative)**
   - Metrics: Measure the number of duplicated programs and signature programs.

9. **Program quality and institutional reputation (new initiative)**
   - Metrics: Construct dashboard indicators for quality and reputation.
Dr. Breece explained that historically the Board has been provided regular assessments on the various components of academic quality. He suggested one concise report on academic quality that contains dashboard indicators based on academic program reviews, a new academic program review process, student engagement, and regional accreditation standard.

Trustee Johnson thanked Dr. Breece for the information which will assist with the Committee’s Work Plan. He commented that the Committee needs to be mindful of the proper balance of the State’s need, appropriate academic programs and how the UMS will work with all aspects of Pre-kindergarten through grade 12 education. Students need to graduate on time and be capable of critical thought regardless of the degree program. He also commented that the UMS is a great value for the students of Maine but the System needs to be aware of the out-of-state tuition sensitivity.

Trustee Hood asked how should the UMS effectively engage the Commissioner of Education. Dr. Breece responded that the Commissioner is involved in the College Readiness Initiative. The UMS provosts will need to define what the System means by college readiness and then reach out to the Community College System to see if there is consistency in the definition. The Commissioner will also be approached to reach out to all of the superintendents to have a dialogue but the important aspect is a consistent definition of college readiness by everyone. Chancellor Pattenaude commented that the Commissioner is also a Trustee and they have had several conversations and he is very responsive and interested in being a partner.

Chancellor Pattenaude stated that the national dialogue needs to be part of the process which includes the common core standards which have now been adopted by 43 state and will impact the definition of college readiness. Another important piece is the Governor’s interest in college completion.

Trustee Wishcamper asked if the metrics outlined in the report are the measures or will the metrics be developed through these basic principles. Dr. Breece stated that some of the metrics stated in the report are very specific and others will be defined further. Trustee Wishcamper commented that it would be difficult for the UMS to measure from this set of metrics because they are not quantifiable.

Trustee Johnson summarized the discussion by stating that based on the alignment strategy and the sense of urgency based on the Committee’s discussions that excellence, college readiness, metrics and the development of a coherent effort are all commendable tasks for the Committee to work on. The next step is to develop a Committee Work Plan with clear objectives, including timelines, which will be presented to the Board at the September meeting.

Chancellor Pattenaude introduced Jonathan Nass, Senior Policy Advisor for the Governor, and thanked him for attending the Board meeting.

Adjournment.

Ellen Doughty for
J. Kelley Wiltbank, Clerk